

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00149R000100010007-6

Man to Watch

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

Harrison: Designs N. Y. Skyline

CPYRGHT

Forty-nine years ago, when he was fourteen and looking for a job, Wallace K. Harrison was told by a Worcester, Mass., contractor: "don't be a damn fool, son. Go into farming."

Mr. Harrison decided to be "a damn fool" and consequently became one of America's foremost architects. Instead of harvesting corn or potatoes, he reaped a crop of steel, concrete and glass which has left a lasting impression on the skyline of New York. For among his accomplishments in the last three decades, Mr. Harrison can point with pride to the United Nations' Secretariat, Rockefeller Center, Idlewild Airport and the 1939 World's Fair trylon and perisphere.

And now he has taken on the task of designing "a new American landmark," the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts on Manhattan's West side. Not only is he acting as co-ordinating architect for the center, but he is designing the new 3,800-seat Metropolitan Opera House within the project.

MR. HARRISON received his education "by absorption" for he left school at fourteen to work, picking up the three R's as he went along, mostly in night school. At nineteen, he secured a job as a junior draftsman with McKim, Mead & White by telling the boss he would work for nothing. Two weeks later he received his first salary, \$20 a week.

After serving as an enlisted



Wallace K. Harrison

In World War I, he studied architecture at Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and other European schools on a two-year Rotch Traveling scholarship. In 1927 Mr. Harrison joined the firm of Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray and promptly landed one of the six architectural jobs on the Rockefeller Center project.

Having made his mark, he formed his own firm with Max Abramovitz, his current partner, and in 1936 received the contract to design the theme edifice for the World's Fair. One thousand and thirty-six designs later, he came up with the famous trylon and perisphere, but he was heartsick when the fair directors cut down the latter structure twenty feet.

DURING World War II, he served as deputy to Governor-elect Nelson A. Rockefeller in the Office of the Co-Ordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Then came his biggest job, to formulate a design for a permanent world capitol in New York as the United Nations director of Planning.

"We set out to build not a monument but a workshop for world peace," Mr. Harrison said, "and we tried to make it the best damn workshop we could." He headed a ten-nation board which designed a revolutionary office building which is a window-

Now he heads five of the nation's finest architects to draw up the plans for the \$75,000,000 Lincoln Center, situated between 62d and 66th Sts. and Broadway, Amsterdam and Columbus Aves. His biggest problem is how to fit fatter Americans into the same size seats in the new Metropolitan Opera House.

Mr. Harrison has his offices at 630 Fifth Ave. and commutes each day from his R. F. D. home in Huntington L. I. He married the former Ellen Milton in 1926 and they have one daughter, Sarah.

PETER D. FRANKLIN.

CPYRGHT